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FWS WILL SEEK SHRIMP IN DEEP WATERS OFF SOUTH ATLANTIC STATES

A new deep-water fishery exploration program in the Atlantic Ocean off the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, is being initiated by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Assistant Secretary of the Interior Wesley A. D'Ewart said today. Emphasis will be placed on shrimp exploration, primarily to see if there is a commercial supply of shrimp in deep water, Mr. D'Ewart said, although the work may provide valuable data on other species of fish.

The project will be carried out with the Service's recently chartered vessel Pelican which is scheduled to leave Jacksonville, Florida, February 29. The Pelican is steel hulled and 73 feet long, and regularly used in commercial shrimp fishing. It is under the direction of Donald Bates, a commercial fisherman and graduate of University of Washington School of Fisheries. The vessel will have a crew of four commercial fishermen. A technician from a State conservation commission may also be added to the roster.

The Pelican is assigned to explore the Atlantic from Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, to Cape Canaveral, Florida. The exploratory work will be done in off-shore waters ranging from 20 to 300 fathoms in depth. In some instances the Pelican will be as much as 90 miles offshore during the progress of investigations.

The project is financed by funds provided by the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act and is one of the activities recommended by the American Fisheries Advisory Committee named by Secretary Douglas McKay.

Shrimping has been an important industry in the waters off the South Atlantic States for a number of years but most of the fishing has been done in the comparatively shallow waters close to shore. Because of the fluctuations in the shrimp take in that area, many believe that the shrimp move periodically into the deeper water some distance from the land.

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